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FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2032
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
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UNCLAS ANTANANARIVO 000076

STATE FOR USAID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA - KLUU, ACONVERY, SROGERS,
TDENYSENKO, CPRATT
STATE FOR FOR USAID DCHA/FFP/DP - JBORNS, SANTHONY, JTAYLOR
STATE FOR USAID AFR/EA - AMARCUS
STATE FOR AF/E - LMORIORATY, MOKEEFE
PRETORIA FOR USAID/OFDA - HHALE, JWESSEL
NAIROBI FOR USAID/EA/FFP - DGORDON
ROME FOR FODAG
GENEVA FOR RMA, DHA, IFRC

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DISASTER DECLARATION - SIGNIFICANT DAMAGES AND POPULATION
DISPLACED DUE TO CYCLONE FANELE AND EXCESSIVE RAINFALL IN
MADAGASCAR

¶1. This is an Action Cable. See Paragraphs 9 and 10 below.

Summary

¶2. The Intense Tropical Cyclone Fanele, a category three tropical cyclone, hit a populated area on the west coast of Madagascar in the Morondava region on the morning of January 20, 2009 and headed westward to Indian Ocean bringing strong winds and heavy rainfall along its track.

¶3. Preliminary reports from stricken areas along the track of the cyclone indicate significant displacement of population due to flooding and damages to houses, infrastructure and agricultural fields. While data is still being gathered, preliminary reports indicated at least 40,000 people were affected by Cyclone Fanele and a second cyclone on the East coast. More than 4,000 people lack shelter and nearly 3,000 ha of rice fields have been damaged.

¶4. As a result of the tropical cyclone Fanele, the Chief of Mission has determined that the disaster is of sufficient magnitude to warrant US Government assistance. The Chief of Mission is therefore exercising his disaster assistance authority. As there is a risk that additional flooding and wind damages will occur through the cyclone season, this disaster declaration remains in force until May 31st, 2009.

¶5. The Ambassador's authority of USD 30,000 will be awarded to non-governmental international organization CARE to immediately initiate cyclone response and recovery programming for cyclone Fanele and to cover subsequent cyclones or major tropical storm related flooding that occurs during the 2009 rainy season.

¶6. Given the scope and scale of the emergency and damages, additional funding may be required to support logistical capacity and the delivery of rapid food aid assistance for critical flood and cyclone affected areas that otherwise would not be reached. Based on past experience, food aid and non food items for the various affected regions and emergency assistance to support agricultural recovery, beyond that provided with the Ambassador's Authority may be necessary to assist the flooding recovery and improve food security in affected zones.

END SUMMARY

Situation

¶17. Upon landfall the tropical cyclone Fanele reached a category three (3) level bringing gusts of 210km/h, winds of 150km/h and heavy rainfall to the west, southwest and central regions of the country. Preliminary reports indicate that many communities throughout affected areas are cut off from normal ground transportation, potentially resulting in shortage of basic food and household items and rising prices. Significant displacement of population due to flooding and damages to houses, infrastructure and agricultural fields were noted. Assessment teams are currently in the field to evaluate overall damages and determine immediate needs.

Action taken by the Government of Madagascar

¶18. Since January 22, 2009, The National Disaster Office (BNGRC), supported by partners, undertook disaster preparation activities in the Morondava region. These activities include sensitization of local population and the distribution of limited food and non food items in cyclone affected areas. BNGRC has also moved forward quickly with coordination efforts among all of the partners who are responding to this disaster.

Action Required

¶19. Due to the magnitude of the cyclone Fanele that hit the country, Post hereby declares a disaster in the affected areas of Madagascar and requests USAID/OFDA provide the Ambassador's Authority of USD 30,000. USAID/Madagascar intends to provide USD 30,000 under the Ambassador's Authority to non-governmental organization CARE to provide immediate relief to communities affected by Cyclone Fanele, including food, roofing materials and other supplies. CARE and other USG partners undertook a preliminary assessment of the damages and are already initiating operations in the region with staff and food supplies to begin mobilizing emergency efforts.

¶10. Given the scope and scale of the emergency, post may request an additional funding to support logistical capacity and the delivery of rapid food aid assistance for critical flood and cyclone affected areas that otherwise could not be reached. Based upon the results of the assessment, Post may consider requesting USAID/Madagascar and USAID/FFP explore options for providing additional food aid for the various regions in the timeliest manner possible, and USAID/OFDA consider additional emergency assistance to support agricultural recovery, beyond that provided with the Ambassador's Authority.

¶11. The rainy season and cyclone season will continue through May 2009. There will be an additional risk of flooding should heavy rainfall continue. Therefore this disaster declaration cable remains in force through the cyclone season through the end of May 2009. Post will continue to monitor the evolving situation in Madagascar, and USAID/Madagascar will coordinate with all local partners and with USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP for all assistance that is provided.

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